

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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/057 W

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R 030804Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2661

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, VN, RP, ASEAN

SUBJECT: MARCOS REPLIES TO HANOI ON ASEAN

REF: SINGAPORE 0986

BEGIN SUMMARY

MARCOS HAS TAKEN SAME TACK AS MALIK AND RAJARATNAM IN REBUFFING
HANOI'S HOSTILE COMMENTARY ON ASEAN.

END SUMMARY

1. AT MARCH 2 AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE FOR DEPARTING

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KING HUSSEIN, REPORTERS QUERIED PRESIDENT MARCOS ABOUT

HANOI APPEAL TO NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS IN ASIA TO OVERTHROW THEIR GOVERNMENTS, AND SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM'S EARLIER REACTION THERETO. ACCORDING PRESS (TRANSCRIPT NOT AVAILABLE) MARCOS URGED HANOI TO DROP BIASED BELIEF THAT ASEAN RESULTED FROM WESTERN OR US INITIATIVE. ACCORDING GOP NEWS AGENCY (PNA) PRESIDENT NOTED THAT ASEAN IS "STUDIOUSLY AVOIDING CONNECTION WITH WESTERN POWERS WHETHER COMMUNIST OR NON-COMMUNIST." HE OBSERVED THAT "WE DO NOT WANT TO PROVOKE" BUT "WE WILL CERTAINLY LOOK AFTER OUR OWN PROTECTION."

2. PRESIDENT NOTED THAT NORTH VIETNAM IS MILITANT IN TEMPER AND MILITANT IN IDEOLOGY AND IS MERELY FOLLOWING WHAT SHE HAS STARTED TO DO (SIC). "I THINK WE SHOULD NOT BE SCARED BY MERE WORDS," MARCOS SAID. "WE HAVE FOUGHT SEDITION AND INSURGENCY SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II."

3. ACCORDING "DAILY EXPRESS" PRESIDENT FURTHER CALLED ATTENTION TO BASIC ASEAN POLICY FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONE OF PEACE AND NEUTRALITY. HE SAID THAT ANY DEFICIENCY, WEAKNESS OR FRUSTRATION ON THE PART OF ANY COUNTRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WILL AFFECT EVERYONE, WHETHER BELONGING TO ASEAN OR NOT, AND THAT INSTEAD OF RESORTING TO "WORD WAR" COUNTRIES OF REGION SHOULD STEP UP EFFORTS TO DEVELOP ECONOMIES.

4. CAUTIOUS TONE OF MARCOS COMMENTARY WAS PUFFED OUT OF SHAPE BY MANILA HEADLINES, E.G., "ASEAN TO REPEL AGGRESSION - FM" (DAILY EXPRESS) AND "FM ALLAYS FEAR OF SUBVERSION" (TIMES JOURNAL). LOCAL PRESS ALSO GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO RAJARATNAM REMARKS ON SAME SUBJECT AND MADE SOME MENTION OF MALIK ANTI-HANOI COMMENTARY.

5. COMMENT: IN PAST, GOP HAS PUBLICLY FAVORED INDOCHINESE ASSOCIATION WITH ASEAN, WHILE PRIVATELY RECOGNIZING THAT SUCH ASSOCIATION UNLIKELY IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE. GOP'S LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH HANOI HAS BEEN TALLED SINCE ABORTIVE MANGILA MISSION OF LAST YEAR. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OF OPEN HANOI HOSTILITY TOWARD ASEAN, MARCOS HAS TAKEN SAME APPROACH AS RAJARATNAM AND MALIK IN REBUFFING NORTH VIETNAMESE, BUT (DESPITE BELLICOSE HEADLINES) HE HAS DONE SO IN MODERATE TERMS, PRESUMABLY IN HOPE THAT OVER TIME NORTH VIETNAMESE INTRANSIGENCE

MAY SOFTEN.
SULLIVAN

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